Staff Code of Conduct

For all schools within the Bosco Catholic Education Trust

This Policy has been approved and adopted by the Bosco Catholic Education Trust

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Foreword from Dave Carter, CEO

What does it mean to work in a Bosco school?

Welcome to the Bosco Catholic Education Trust. We are a group of Catholic schools serving children and families across Sussex. Working in a Catholic school is different and it's important that everyone understands the important part they play when they join one of our schools. This short booklet aims to set out what those expectations are and what it means for each member of staff.

Catholic schools are faith communities, based on a belief in God and on a Christian way of life. They were originally built to serve the poor and disadvantaged, and this is still a major part of our work – particularly given St John Bosco was doing this over 150 years ago in Turin. In our Bosco schools we have staff with a wide variety of beliefs. We have very committed and not so committed Catholics, people of different faiths, agnostics and atheists. Absolutely everyone is welcome to work in our schools but there is a strong expectation that we behave in a certain way and understand that we are all here to serve the children; this is non-negotiable.

To be a great Catholic school we must first be a great school and deliver on results. We must also ensure the children have all the skills, knowledge and attributes to live and work in a global post-covid society. We also provide children with opportunities to grow in their faith, so they leave us closer to God and doing their bit to make society a better place by living a good Christian life.

We use St John Bosco as our role model, remembering his guiding principles that children must be 'known and loved'. Whatever decision we make must always put the needs of the children first, helping them to fulfil their God-given potential. We never accept second-best or excuses. Love and kindness underpin all that we do – in our relationships with one another and in our behaviours as a Catholic community.

The Bosco Catholic Education Trust is a Christ-centred family of Catholic academies, within the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, working together as one body to provide an outstanding education for all. As Catholic schools, we endeavour to develop confident, compassionate and faithful young people. Through partnership, collaboration and mutual support, we seek to enable all those entrusted to our care to become the person God called them to be.

"Serve the Lord joyfully"

We are guided by the Gospel values of: Love, Faith, Gratitude, Humility, Humour, Integrity, Justice, Peace, Prayer, Reconciliation, Respect, Service, Tolerance.

So, what does this look like for us on a daily basis?

Love - we believe every child is good and made in the image of Christ. Our job is to love each of them whatever challenges they provide through genuine care and concern and to treat everyone in our community as we would like to be treated, particularly the less fortunate. In

the words of St John Bosco “Young people not only need to be loved, but they also need to know that they are loved.”

Faith - sometimes we are called to “take the first step even when we can’t see the whole staircase”. Showing faith means that we trust that God is there and will look after us.

Gratitude - we all have so much to be thankful for. The day always feels better if we take a moment to pause and thank God for the family, friends and good things we have. “If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.”

Humility - we are not boastful and are open enough to recognise our own weaknesses and look for help from others

Humour - God and the children constantly invite us to rejoice and laugh, sometimes at ourselves! This is contagious as God wants us all to be happy. This helps us to develop personal connection with the children, particularly the hardest to reach.

Integrity - as a member of the Bosco community this means we always try to “do the right thing even when no-one is looking”.

Justice - children are finely tuned judges of what is right (“That’s not fair!”). We show justice by fair and consistent actions to everyone, regardless of who they are.

Peace – in our schools, we work to create a peaceful and calm atmosphere where children can thrive through a sense of inclusion and without conflict. We show our children how to build and keep healthy and harmonious relationships

Prayer - is a conversation with God. In Catholic schools this is a daily part of our lives, and we all take part in Assemblies and worship. We offer up our hearts and minds to God who knows and loves us tenderly.

Reconciliation - when a child does something wrong, we take appropriate action then forgive, draw a line and start again afresh on friendly terms. We put things right and get everyone back on track, however often we need to.

Respect - this means we treat every child with dignity and value and always speak to them with kindness. As staff, we never humiliate or chastise a child in public or say negative things about them. Praise, encouragement and appropriate apologies all create an atmosphere of respect for the rights of each person.

Service - we are here to serve the children and each other and do whatever it takes to ensure we provide the best possible education for them.

Tolerance - we promote openness and respect of everyone by demonstrating empathy and compassion through our words and our actions.

Thank you for everything you do for our children. As Maya Angelou said, “children will forget what you said, children will forget what you did but they will never forget how you made them feel”.

Dave Carter
Bosco CET

1. Mission and Principles

1.1 The mission of Bosco Catholic Education Trust is to provide an outstanding Catholic education for all the children in our schools. We will follow the example and teachings of Christ and everything we do will be inspired by gospel values. We will strive for excellence in all areas of our work and cherish every child in our care.

1.2 As a member of staff in the Trust everything we say and do is guided by this mission. We treat one another as we hope they would treat us, and we remember that everyone we meet is made in the image and likeness of God. This document lays out more formally the expectations of all staff who work in the Bosco Catholic Education Trust, but please remember the success of our schools is down to you and is founded upon the excellent relationships that currently exist between us all. We can never take this for granted and are blessed that we work in such caring and supportive environments. This only works because we all pull our weight and work hard to maintain the highest professional standards of conduct in all aspects of our work.

1.3 The Directors and Governors are committed to securing the wellbeing of all members of the Catholic community by creating a safe, secure, and stimulating learning environment. This code sets out the key principles which govern the way in which we work together; it draws on DfE guidance and a range of school policies.

1.4 This document links to the following policies: Equality, Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, etc. It is informed by DfE guidance on 'Screening Searching and Confiscation' (Sept 2022), 'Use of Reasonable Force' (July 2013), 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Sept 2024). All staff must also consult the Handbooks of each individual school within the Bosco Catholic Education Trust for specific expectations for their school.

1.5 All members of the Bosco Catholic Education Trust community including students, staff, parents, governors, volunteers, trainees, and visitors should:

- 1.5.1 Have high expectations of themselves and of others.
- 1.5.2 Maintain high personal standards in their attendance and punctuality.
- 1.5.3 Treat one another with fairness, dignity, and respect at all times.
- 1.5.4 Display the characteristics they want others to show including honesty, patience and a genuine concern for others.
- 1.5.5 Recognise the achievements of others.
- 1.5.6 Respect the boundaries in their relationships with each other and not abuse their position or age by entering into inappropriate relationships; committing such acts against an individual which are illegal, e.g., physical assault, harassment; undermining, bullying or intimidating any other member of the school community.
- 1.5.7 Work within set deadlines and arrive on time for meetings, lessons and events.
- 1.5.8 Take into account others work pressures and commitments.
- 1.5.9 Dress in an appropriate manner as set out in the school's dress/uniform code.
- 1.5.10 Ask for support whenever needed.

1.5.11 Report incidents or actions of others which they feel threaten the welfare and security of any member of the school community.

1.6 We rely on all staff:

1.6.1 Demonstrating professionalism in their dealings with colleagues, students, parents and visitors to the school and treating each with respect.

1.6.2 Acting as good role models in behaviour, attitude, punctuality and professional dress for the young people in our care.

1.6.3 Carrying out their responsibilities to the best of their abilities, bearing in mind the reliance that we all have on the co-operation and support of others.

1.6.4 Actively committing to their own professional development and the aspirations of the school.

1.6.5 In the case of teachers, in addition to this code of conduct, committing to meet the standards outlined in the Teachers' Standards published by the Teaching Agency ('Personal and Professional Conduct').

1.6.6 Meeting the administrative, security (including computer network aspects) and health and safety requirements of the school.

1.6.7 Ensuring confidentiality about school matters and ensuring that school and student/staff information is shared only with appropriate parties who need to know as part of the school's work

1.6.8 Demonstrating a desire and willingness to follow school policies and procedures.

1.6.9 Promoting fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

1.6.10 Maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality as the norm.

1.6.11 Ensuring that all Child Protection (CP) issues are passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

1.6.12 The school expects all employees to comply with lawful written and oral instruction unless to do so would result in a health and safety risk.

1.6.13 Maintain the professional standards expected of their roles, contributing to the success of the school and Trust working practices as directed by the Headteacher.

1.6.14 Ensure that they have read and adhere to the relevant Trust policies located on the website: Appraisal policy; Attendance Management policy: Capability policy; Child Protection and Safeguarding policy (including all supplementary policies); Complaints policy; Data Protection policy; Disciplinary policy; Finance (including supplementary finance policies); Grievance policy; Health and Safety policy; Relationship and Sex Education policy; SEND policy; Whistleblowing policy; Pay policy.

1.6.15 Alert the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors and CEO in the case of the Headteacher) at the earliest opportunity if they are aware that they have conducted themselves in a way which may have breached the expected standards of conduct.

1.7 Should a member of staff become aware of any conduct on the part of a colleague which raises concerns regarding health and safety, safeguarding or criminal activity – they have a duty to disclose this.

1.8 Failure to follow the Staff Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the Disciplinary policy.

2. Parents as employees

2.1 It is acknowledged that some staff also have children who attend the school. It is recognised that in these cases the staff fulfil a dual role of parent and employee.

2.2 Parents as employees should ensure that they uphold boundaries between the two roles and that their behaviour does not constitute a conflict of interest. For example, they must maintain the same level of confidentiality despite social expectations. Parent-staff should discuss any inter-role conflict with their line manager.

3. Staff Dress Code

3.1 How we dress gives others an impression of how important we feel an occasion is, hence, we dress up for interviews, weddings, etc. Members of staff are asked to dress very smartly as this gives the impression to everyone that we feel working in a school is a really important occasion. It is also important that we maintain the same high standards of dress as we expect from the children.

3.2 The staff dress code must also be appropriate for the nature of the role undertaken which will vary depending on the sector of the school, role of the member of staff and occasion, e.g., in the secondary sector, the staff dress code is formal business wear, i.e., suits or tailored dresses with a jacket (no cardigans or cropped trousers). In the primary sector, the dress code is smart clothing, appropriate to the setting in which the staff member works. Please ensure you wear formal shoes; flip flops are not permitted..

3.3 Ideally tattoos should be covered and no tattoos that could be considered offensive should be on display. Additional piercings (apart from ear lobes) should be discreet and permitted only at the discretion of the individual school leadership team, taking health & safety risks into consideration (such as nose rings that could be accidentally ripped out).

3.4 The exception to this formal wear is on INSET days when staff wear casual clothes unless they are presenting. For greater detail on specific dress codes see your school Handbook. The School recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach where this affects dress requirements.

4. Safeguarding

4.1 Further details can be found in the Bosco Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and individual school's supplemental Safeguarding Policies and Statements.

4.2 All staff have a responsibility to:

4.2.1 Safeguard pupils and students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Promote the welfare of pupils/students and provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

4.2.2 Identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.

4.2.3 Report as soon as possible and without delay any concerns regarding child protection /safeguarding to the Headteacher/DSL (or Chair of Governors and CEO where concerns relate to the Headteacher). All staff must be aware of the process to follow if they have concerns about a child and report as soon as possible and without delay any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4.3 Staff should also be aware of the Prevent Duty, online safety, mental health, their legal duty regarding FGM, and other areas that may cause a risk to the safety of a pupil. All Employees must ensure they have read, understood and comply with:

4.3.1 Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024).

4.3.2 The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

4.3.3 The Trust Supplemental Safeguarding Policies.

4.3.4 The School's Behaviour Management Policy.

4.4 Staff must attend and comply with any training as required by the school associated with the safeguarding of pupils / students.

<u>Low level concerns</u>

All staff

4.5 Report low-level concerns (as defined in KCSIE 2024) about any member of staff/supply staff, volunteer or contractor to the DSL (or deputy) and where a low-level concern is raised about the DSL it will be shared with the Headteacher. Low-level concerns about the Headteacher should be shared with the Chair of Governors or CEO.

4.6 A 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harms threshold. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that: is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

4.6.1 Being over friendly with children.

4.6.2 Having favourites.

4.6.3 Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone.

4.6.4 Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.

4.6.5 Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.

The Headteacher

4.7 The Headteacher should record 'low-level concerns' in cases which concern a member of staff, supply staff, contractor or a volunteer. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the

individual wishes to remain anonymous that will be respected as far as reasonably possible.

5. Staff / Pupil Relationships

5.1 All staff must observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position and position of trust. They must act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably question the appropriateness of their conduct or behaviour. The relationship between a member of staff and a pupil is not a relationship of equals, staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

5.2 If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff must ensure that:

5.2.1 This takes place in a public place that others can access.

5.2.2 Others can see into the room.

5.2.3 A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place.

5.3 Staff are encouraged to take part in school related activities such as trips, fixtures, rehearsals and extracurricular activities which are an important part of the positive relationships between staff and pupils. However, staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of official school activities and non-school hours.

5.4 Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes mobile numbers, social media profiles, gaming sites or other methods of communication.

5.5 Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with children for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a child seeks to establish social contact staff should exercise professional judgement when responding and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

5.6 Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with children and must not engage in any sexual activity with a child.

5.7 Staff should be familiar with sections 15A and 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003, regarding communication with children and the abuse of a position of trust.

5.8 While it is accepted that many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable (apart from class prizes or general incentives such as fruit or pencils given as part of school activities).

5.9 If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this must be reported to his/her line manager or the Headteacher.

6. Communication and Social Media

6.1 Staff must ensure that their online presence/profile is compatible with their professional role.

6.2 Communication between pupils or students and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, tablets, text messages, emails, instant messages, websites, social media such as Facebook,

6.3 Twitter, Instagram, chatrooms, forums, blogs, apps such as WhatsApp, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, webcams and other hand-held devices.

6.4 Staff should not share any personal information with pupils, and they should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. They should ensure that all communications are transparent and avoid any communication that could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.

6.5 Staff must not give their personal contact details such as home/mobile phone number; home or personal e-mail address or social networking details to pupils or students unless the need to do so is agreed in writing with senior management.

6.6 It is recommended that staff ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent pupils or students from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent pupils or students from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.

6.7 Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by colleagues, pupils or students, parents and carers, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time. Staff must ensure that their on-line profiles are consistent with the professional image expected by Bosco Catholic Education Trust and must not post material which damages the reputation of the school, or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people.

6.8 Staff who are also parents of children at a school within the Trust, need to take additional care to ensure that their families' social media presence does not compromise their own professional standing in the community, or above guidance. If their children are able to see their social media profiles, care must be taken that this does not extend to their children's friends who are also pupils at the school. Please discuss with your Headteacher if you have concerns about this aspect of the code of conduct.

7. Acceptable Use of Technology

7.1 Please see the Safeguarding supplementary policies for further guidance

Use of Personal Mobile Phones / Devices

7.2 Staff are not permitted to make/receive personal calls/texts, send/receive emails or access internet/social media during work time where children are present.

7.3 Staff should ensure that mobile devices are out of sight and silent as appropriate in the classroom or where children are present. Mobile devices should not be left on display.

7.4 Staff should not use their personal equipment (mobile phones/cameras/tablets) to take photos or make recordings of pupils/students unless agreed with Senior Leadership for specific circumstances. Should personal equipment be used, any photos, recordings or videos should be uploaded to the school system or appropriate app without delay and permanently removed from the personal device.

Monitoring of Usage

7.5 Staff must not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to,

sending obscene or offensive emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

7.6 The Trust and individual schools have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system and will do so on a random basis and if a specific concern is raised. The schools also filter for key words and phrases/images as part of the safeguarding processes. This monitoring will be proportionate and will take place in accordance with data protection /privacy legislation.

7.7 The school may address concerns regarding unauthorised, unacceptable or inappropriate use of ICT systems/devices or social media as a disciplinary matter.

Safe Use of Images

7.8 Making and using images of pupils will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parents/carers. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

7.9 For the protection of children, it is recommended that when using images for publicity purposes that the following guidance should be followed, unless specific permission has been sought:

- 7.9.1 If the image is used, avoid naming the child, (or, as a minimum, use first names rather than surnames).
- 7.9.2 If the child is named, avoid using their image.
- 7.9.3 Schools should establish whether the image will be retained for further use, where and for how long.
- 7.9.4 Images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 In the course of their role, staff often have access to confidential or sensitive information about pupils/students, their parents/carers, colleagues or the business and operation of the School.

8.2 All staff must work in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

8.3 Such information must never be:

- 8.3.1 Disclosed to any person without the relevant authority.
- 8.3.2 Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others.
- 8.3.3 Used for a purpose other than it was collected and intended for.

8.4 Specifically, all staff must:

- 8.4.1 Observe the School's procedures for the release of information to other agencies and members of the public.
- 8.4.2 Not use or share confidential information inappropriately or for personal gain.
- 8.4.3 Refrain from speaking inappropriately about the school community, pupils, parents, staff or governors including discussing incidents, operational or employment matters with parents/members of the public.
- 8.4.4 Ensure all confidential data is kept secure and password protected.

8.5 Should staff be in doubt about the appropriateness of sharing information they should seek guidance from the Headteacher.

8.6 This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns. Staff have a statutory obligation to immediately share with the school's DSL or Deputy DSL any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a child. Staff should pass on information immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. Staff must never promise a child that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told.

8.7 Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the school.

9. Honesty and Integrity

9.1 Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

9.2 Any member of staff carrying out additional work or consultancy during the school day must, prior to accepting the role, gain permission from the Headteacher, or in the case of a Headteacher, the Bosco Catholic Education Trust CEO. All payments must be paid directly into the school budget.

9.3 Staff must not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £25 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

9.4 Staff must ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct. Any changes to their personal circumstances that may impact on their suitability to work with children must be discussed with their Headteacher or line manager.

10. Conduct Outside of Work

10.1 Staff must not act in a way that would bring the Bosco Catholic Education Trust, any of its schools, the diocese or the teaching profession into disrepute or affect their suitability to undertake their job role or work with children and young people. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school or school personnel on social media.

11. Equality

11.1 All staff, pupils and members of the local community have a right to be treated with fairness and equality. Staff must ensure that they comply at all times with the policies relating to equality issues. Victimisation, bullying and harassment of, or discrimination against other work colleagues, pupils or members of the community could constitute disciplinary proceedings or gross misconduct. All staff are expected to report any concerns or suspicions they may have about the treatment of others to their line manager or the Headteacher.

12. Personal Relationships – Conflict of Interest

12.1 The Bosco Catholic Education Trust places the responsibility on the individual member of staff to withdraw from decisions whereby, owing to their personal relationship, there might be either real or perceived conflicts of interest.

12.2 Wherever possible, line managers should withdraw from exercising managerial / supervisory responsibilities where a close relative/partner/friend is involved. In all cases involving line management and performance/pay decisions, close relationships must be declared by the line manager to the Headteacher or in the case of a Headteacher to the CEO.

12.3 If any member of staff believes that they may be personally adversely affected by a misuse of power/authority or conflict of interest, they should raise this with their line manager or Headteacher either informally or through a grievance.

12.4 All staff must ensure that they declare any personal or business interests to the Headteacher that may be perceived to be relevant or in conflict with their school role.

12.5 Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school, Trust and its pupils.